



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

OWNER: Mille Lacs of Ojibwe
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359

PROJECT: Crisis Media Relations and Emergency Communication Services

RFP Issued By: Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe – Office of Governmental Affairs

RFP Issue Date: February 9, 2026

RFP Due Date: February 23, 2026 Winning bid notified by EOD following due date.

Contract Term: September 30, 2026 (end of Fiscal Year 2026).

1. Introduction and Background - The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (the “Band”) is a federally recognized sovereign Tribal Nation exercising inherent governmental authority. The Governmental Affairs Office represents the Band’s interests in intergovernmental relations, public policy, and communications with Band members, governmental partners, media outlets, and the general public.

The Band is seeking **qualified crisis media and emergency public communications firms** to provide **immediate-response and short-term crisis communications support** during periods of heightened public scrutiny, misinformation, or emergency situations.

This RFP is intended to establish a **rapid-response crisis media support contract** that may be activated following the identification of an immediate communications need. The selected firm will support the Band in stabilizing media narratives, responding to misinformation, protecting the Band’s sovereignty and reputation, and transitioning communications back to internal or long-term providers once the crisis period concludes.

2. Purpose of the RFP - The purpose of this RFP is to secure **on-call crisis media relations and emergency public communications services** that can be deployed rapidly during high risk, time-sensitive, or reputationally significant events.

This RFP is **not intended to procure ongoing or day-to-day public relations services**. Instead, it is designed to ensure the Band has immediate access to experienced crisis communications professionals who can:

- Respond to breaking or emergent situations;
- Manage intense or adversarial media attention;
- Counter misinformation and disinformation;
- Support Band leadership with disciplined, legally sound messaging; and
- Assist in de-escalation and transition planning following the crisis period.

3. Scope of Work - Respondents must be capable of providing **immediate, high-level crisis communications support** upon notice. Services may include, but are not limited to:

- A. Immediate Crisis Media Response** - Rapid deployment (same-day) of crisis communications support upon activation. Act as a strategic advisor to Band leadership and the Governmental Affairs Office during crisis events. Development of immediate holding statements, press statements, FAQs, and key messages.
- B. Crisis Media Relations** - Direct engagement with local, regional, national, and Tribal media outlets. Media inquiry triage and response coordination. Preparation of spokesperson briefing materials and interview preparation.
- C. Misinformation and Narrative Management** - Monitoring of traditional media, social media, and online platforms for misinformation. Development of rapid rebuttal and corrective messaging strategies. Coordination with legal counsel where appropriate.
- D. Leadership and Spokesperson Support** - Real-time message discipline guidance for elected leadership and designated spokespersons. On-call coaching for interviews, press conferences, or public statements.
- E. Crisis Planning and Transition Support** - Development or refinement of crisis communications protocols during activation. Recommendations for de-escalation and transition back to normal communications operations. Brief post-crisis assessment and lessons-learned memo.

4. Desired Qualifications - In addition to general public relations qualifications,

respondents must demonstrate **specific crisis communications expertise**, including:

- Proven experience leading crisis media responses for governmental, Tribal, or public-sector entities.
- Familiarity with Tribal sovereignty, jurisdictional complexity, and government-to-government relations.
- Demonstrate ability to operate under intense pressure and public scrutiny.
- Experience managing misinformation, disinformation, or hostile media environments.
- Availability for rapid activation, including evenings, weekends, and holidays.

5. Proposal Requirements - Proposals should be clear, concise, and include the following:

- **Cover Letter** - Signed by an authorized representative of the firm.
- **Firm Overview** - History, size, and structure of the firm. Office location(s) and primary

point of contact.

- **Relevant Experience** - Description of comparable clients and projects. Specific experience working with Tribal Nations or governmental entities (if applicable).
- **Proposed Approach and Work Plan** - Description of how the firm would meet the Scope of Work. Proposed communication strategies and methods.
- **Training Plan** - Description of proposed media and communications training offerings, including format, duration, and audience.
- **Detailed Cost and Pricing Proposal** - Respondents must submit a **separate and itemized pricing proposal** that clearly identifies costs for each major service component. Pricing must be transparent, auditable, and suitable for governmental review. At a minimum, the cost proposal must include:

A. Base Retainer Pricing

- Monthly or annual retainer rate for ongoing public relations and media relations services.
- Clear description of services included in the base retainer.
- Identification of any service caps (e.g., hours per month) and overage rates.

B. Media Relations and Content Development

- Per-item or hourly pricing for press releases, media advisories, statements, op-eds, talking points, and briefing materials if not included in the base retainer.

C. Crisis and Issues Management

- Hourly or project-based rates for crisis communications support.
- After-hours, weekend, and emergency response rates.
- Pricing for development or updates to crisis communications plans.

D. Training and Capacity Building

- Per-session pricing for media training, spokesperson training, and staff communications training.
- Pricing for in-person versus virtual trainings.
- Pricing for tabletop exercises or crisis simulations.
- Identification of any travel-related costs.

E. Strategic Planning and Special Projects

- Project-based pricing for communications strategies, campaigns, or major initiatives.
- Pricing for research, message testing, or stakeholder analysis.

F. Optional and Add-On Services

- Clearly identified optional services with separate pricing.
- Any volume discounts or bundled pricing options.

G. Billing and Invoicing Practices

- Description of billing frequency and invoicing detail.

- Sample invoice, if available.
- Identification of reimbursable expenses and required documentation.

H. References

- At least three (3) professional references.

6. Evaluation Criteria - Proposals will be evaluated based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the Band's needs and objectives.
- Relevant experience and qualifications.
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed approach.
- Experience with Tribal, governmental, or crisis communications.
- Proposed cost and overall value.
- Quality of references.

7. Submission Instructions - Proposals must be submitted by the deadline noted above.

Late submissions will not be considered. **Submission Method. Email to:**

Michael.LeGarde@millelacsband.com. In subject line: MLBO RFP for Crisis Media **or mail:**

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Attn: Government Affairs RPF

43408 Oodena Drive Onamia, MN 56359

Contact for Questions: Jamie Edwards, Senior Advisor of Government Affairs, 612-850-2124.

8. Terms and Conditions - The Band reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities, and to request additional information. Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Band to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal. Any contract awarded will be subject to applicable Tribal laws, policies, and procurement requirements. Preference may be given in accordance with Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe procurement and preference laws.

9. Contract Term and Activation - The Band anticipates awarding one contract for crisis media services. Contracts will be **on-call and activated as needed** by written or verbal notice from the Governmental Affairs Office. The Band reserves the right to limit the duration and scope of any activation.

10. Confidentiality - All information provided by the Band in connection with this RFP shall be treated as confidential unless otherwise stated.

FY2026 Public Relations/Media Relations Professional Services

FIRM NAME: _____

CONTACT NAME: _____

CONTACT EMAIL: _____

CONTACT PHONE: _____

PRICING:

Annual Sum for Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe: _____